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Scope

Instant Intelligence

At Altered States relaxation centre in Los Angeles, a client undergoes a Synchro Energizer session: $10 for 30 minutes.

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pictures by DPA PRESS

Now, machines that can better your brain power

The Synchro Energizer is one of the most popular machines, with stereo headphones and welder-style glasses: it costs $2 400.

AS WITH ALL NEW FADS, there are fervent followers and strong sceptics; but whatever the arguments, pro and con, machines vaunted for rendering humans more intelligent are selling like hot cakes.

Already a sensation in the United States, they have begun to make an appearance elsewhere, including Japan, Germany, Bulgaria, the Soviet Union and Great Britain. In the state of California alone, more than 5 000 doctors have bought Brain Tuners to treat their patients. In America, there are more than a dozen models, ranging in price from $400 to $12 000: Alpha Stim, Synchro Energizer, Cap Scan, Brain Tuner, Graham Potentializer, Mind Mirror, and so on.

Their principle is similar: to stimulate cerebral activity through impulses or electromagnetic waves. Some who have tested their IQs before and after a few months of use claim their scores improved. Researchers at the US Army Defense Information School in Fort Harrison, near Washington, DC, discovered that regular use of the Hemy Sync increased psychometer capacities by 70 percent.

This effect was so startling that representatives of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) paid a visit to this particular machine's inventor, Robert Monroe, in Virginia. CIA investigators went through his laboratory thoroughly, then, citing the "superior interests of national security", left with copies of his blueprints and calculations.

American universities are also interested in this phenomenon. For example, the Graham Potentializer is now being tested in Californian universities.

SCIENCE? MAGIC? THE power of suggestion? A specialist on the subject, Michael Hutchinson, who recently published the book *Mega Brain*, explains how they work:

"First of all, you must know that our understanding of how the human mind works is in full evolution. The scientific community is making more and more discoveries. What we believed to be true only yesterday is discovered today to be totally inexact. During the last ten years, we've discovered more about the brain than throughout all of the history of science."

The most important discovery is that the brain reacts in a surprising manner to its surrounding environment. Experiments conducted at Berkeley placed laboratory rats in different surroundings. Those submitted to a multitude of stimulations had much better results than the others; they achieved their goal – a piece of cheese, for example – much faster.

Even more impressively, the brains of these rats rapidly became larger and heavier. A microscopic examination of these brains showed that this increase in size and weight was due to an enormous multiplication of neurons and an increase in the quality and density of the synapses – the links – among these neurons.

The same results can be obtained in the human brain; in a favourable environment and similar conditions, the mind expands literally like a well-watered flower

"Tanking", a relaxation tank, many of which are equipped with video screens inside where a program synchronised with the mind machine's headphones and glasses completes the sensual and sensorial experience.

or a muscle which is exercised. It is an organ capable of improving its performance in an extraordinary fashion.

THE SECRET LIES IN finding the right kind of stimulation, and trying a variety of the new special mind machines. Several models can be found at the famous relaxation centre, Altered States, in Los Angeles, which caters to a variety of clients, from harried businessmen and executives in high-pressure jobs to athletes and amateurs.

There, one can try out the Hemi Sync in a dark room, where stereo-sound headphones provoke a faintly hallucinogenic sensation; it's as if the inside of the skull is being tickled with a feather. Or, while one is stretched out on a couch, the Synchro Energizer, which has sound and sight, thanks to a pair of spectacles resembling those worn by welders.

The most sophisticated machine on the market, which cannot be found at Altered States, is the Cap Scan. Consisting of a decoder and a computer, it projects the waves from the subject's mind on to a video screen; what one sees on the screen then influences what goes on in the mind, once again modifying the screen image, in a continual series of sensations.

Whatever the cause and effect, whether these mind machines can make one more intelligent or not, the author of this article cannot draw a firm conclusion after trying several kinds. He affirms, however, that his memory improved, and he looks and feels better. □